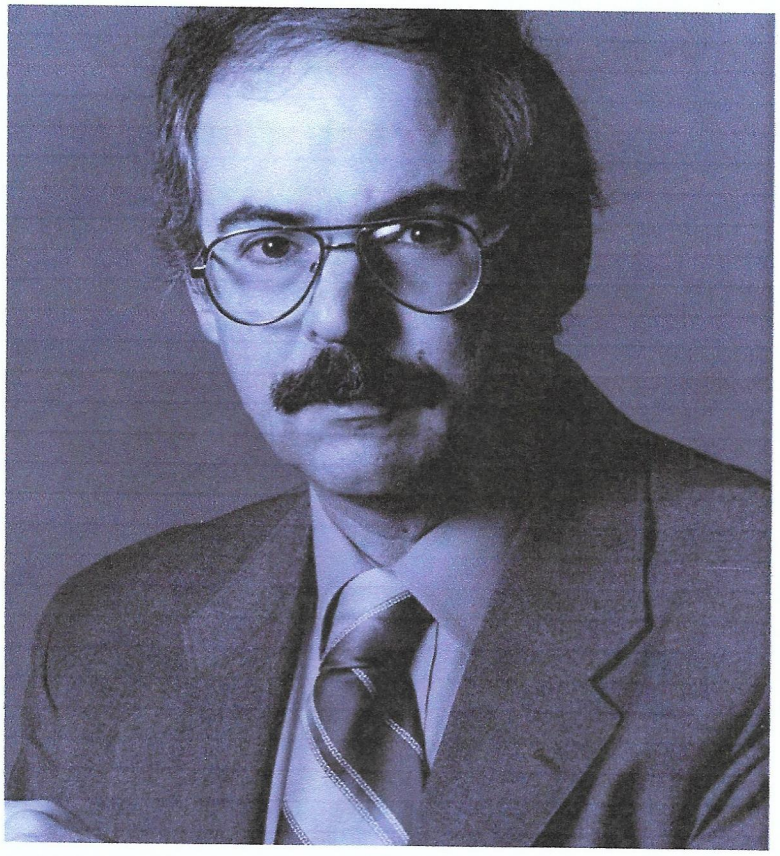

Railroad job presented challenges

Eric Porch earns MMR #245

Our newest Master Model Railroader, Eric Porch, was born and raised in Mansfield, Ohio over 40 years ago. He doesn't remember exactly how his interest in trains developed but it probably started when he made trips with his father to Union Station to watch trains on the PRR and Erie.

Eric also has vague memories of the last of steam on the B&O's Mansfield local, which would have been about 1958. The fact that there was always a Lionel train set around the house also contributed to his developing interest in trains and model railroading.

By the time high school rolled around he had started in HO scale in a small way and had joined the local model railroad club. This in turn led to membership in the NMRA (Div. 6, MCR) which opened lots of doors. He met many other modelers who showed him what could be done in the hobby. Joe Slanser, MMR, and former *Bulletin* Editor Bob Kitley, were early sources of inspiration.

After college Eric found himself in a desk job but discovered it wasn't to his liking, so in 1978 he hired out as a brakeman on Conrail in nearby Crestline, Ohio. Four months later he transferred to fireman and was promoted to engineer in 1979. With this came a move to Youngstown, Ohio.

During the 15 years he lived there, Eric built two layouts and became involved with Div. 1 MCR, which included stints as Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent. Somewhere along the line he started in the Achievement Program.

Working on the real railroad meant an erratic schedule for Eric — this caused havoc with judging. Eric would like to thank AP Judges Jack DeMain, Charles McKoy and Eli Rantanes for their patience and dedication. They were willing to visit his house at the drop of a hat to judge models. In Eric's own words, "the whole process would have taken a lot longer without their help".

His job brought him back to Mansfield in 1995 and with it involvement in Div. 6. I would seem that Div. 6 has not involved him enough because a third layout is now underway.

Eric has earned Certificates of Achievement as Master Builder of Motive Power, Cars, Structures and Scenery, a Model Railroad Engineer - Civil and Electrical and an Association Volunteer.

Eric has many interests other than model railroading which make demands on his time. Other memberships include the PRR Technical & Historical Society, The National Rifle Association, Great Lakes Historical Society and the Titanic Historical Society. If that isn't enough he has been known to tinker occasionally with his player piano.

Congratulations Eric.•